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- CIA BOOSTS CRACK BOOM
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- FEMINIST SOAP OPERAS

AND MORE

December 1996



CAMPUS DIARY

On Saturday, November 16, the John Birch Society brought Sam Blumfield, an "expert in home schooling," to Russell Library to talk about what's wrong with the public school systems. I only stayed for half an hour of the three-hour event, but I was there long enough to learn a lot about what the one-world socialists are really doing to this country.

My first clue was the phrase "Get US out of the UN." It was everywhere—on a bumper sticker stuck to the podium, on several different flyers, and in the conversations of the Society members and others wandering around talking before the speech started.

Then there was the edition of *New American*, the glossy Birch Society magazine, that they were selling. Its front cover read "Conspiracy for Control: Special Report." At first I thought it was a joke, maybe a parody, at least a bit of light-hearted self-mockery. No, it was totally serious. As was the heavy-set man talking to a Bircher who was selling audio tapes on various subjects. "I'm still seeing a lot of

black helicopters around. Do you have any tapes on that?" he asked.

But I think my favorite part of the scene was the man who ran the meeting, a New England Birch Society official. He looked perhaps more like a game show host than anyone I've ever met in person, and he wore a flag tie. When I admitted that I was sort of from the press (I couldn't think of another reason I would be taking notes on their literature and didn't think it would be a good idea to offer no explanation at all.), he gave me a slimy hand-shake and did a fairly good job of hiding his dismay at my shaved head.

Before I had a chance to sign up on their mailing list, Flag Man called the meeting to order. In the course of introducing the speaker, he cleared up any remaining doubts I might have had, saying, "There is a conspiracy. Education plays a key role in this."

Blumfield clarified the point. It seems that the Carnegie Corporation, the National Education Association, and, for reasons I forget, the Council on Foreign Relations, are responsible for the current troubles of our nation's youth. And school-to-work programs, in which educators work with companies to find jobs for graduating students, are part of a socialist conspiracy. Funny, I would have said they were part of a capitalist conspiracy.

It's not just the public schools that are ruining the youth though. According to "Something Queer on Campus," a flier I picked up, it turns out that at universities across the country (you know, the ones "packed with Clinton-style liberals") children receive "a thorough indoctrination in the 'gay' and lesbian lifestyle." Fortunately, unlike Brown, Wellesley, and Sarah Lawrence, Wesleyan was not listed as a "homo-friendly" school.

Still, we'd better keep an eye out for socialist, internationalist homosexuals. You never know—even our schoolmates and professors could be part of the conspiracy.

—Livia Gershon

What is *Hermes*?

Hermes produces seven issues a year. We publish a wide range of material, including articles on campus life, photo essays, short fiction, and opinion pieces, but we tend to focus on activism and social commentary from a variety of viewpoints. *Hermes* serves as an open forum in which anyone can publish his/her ideas and/or insights. The staff of *Hermes* meets once a week: usually on Sundays at 4pm in the WSA building (190 High St.). We are a non-hierarchical collective. Plans for next semester include an issue on campus history and much more. We are actively seeking new membership and initiative in any direction and welcome anyone who wants to be a part of us.

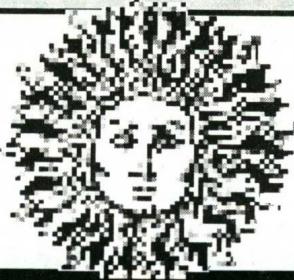
H E R M E S

Drugs of Choice

Marijuana	B. Edwards-Tiekert
Knowledge	Monique Daviau
Loud Shirts	Dyna Moe
Paranoia	Sarah Wilkes
PCP	Daniel Young
LSD	Livia Gershon
S & M	Trevor Griffey
Cookie Dough	Megan Wolff
Crack	David Vine
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Minor Threat	Justin Tamplin
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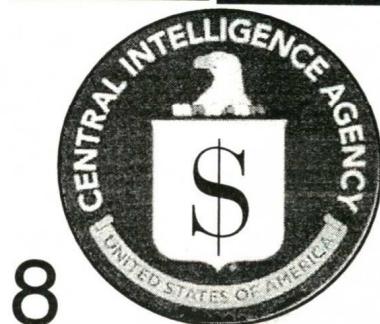
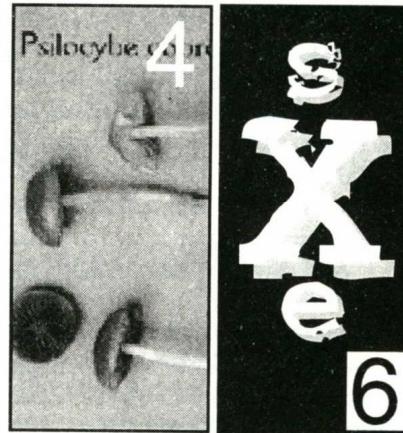
All opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the *Hermes* staff.

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Understanding Use

Some Drugs are Not Just an Unfortunate Evil

Trevor Griffey

It would seem that many people have not escaped the war on drugs unscathed. And by association, it would seem that the rest of us haven't either. If we look at the absurd laws against the use or distribution of illegal drugs; the immense burden our government is undertaking to enforce these laws and imprison our people; the attitudes which justify employers' drug tests; the anti-drug measures being taken in our schools; and if we look at how Dole tried to blame Clinton for the supposed increased drug use in this country, it seems fair to say that many people's attitudes toward the use of drugs are close to hysterical.

And this hysteria has made many problems for our society.

First, a fear of drugs is most often created or manipulated to be a fear of certain groups—in particular, the poor, the non-white, the young, and various social outcasts. Fear is in turn used as an ideological base for various forms of violence against these groups. The articles on prisons, crime, and drug laws on pages 16-19 of this issue make this point quite well.

Second, this hysteria about drugs is irrational in targeting its enemies. The word "drug" comes to mean any mind-altering substance which is illegal. It is often difficult to decipher whether they are bad because they are illegal or whether they are illegal because they are bad, since almost no one will say why certain drugs are illegal and others not. Why, for instance, is alcohol barely regulated and marijuana illegal when 95% of all violent crimes on university and college campuses are alcohol related and pot has notoriously nonviolent effects? Further, why should we make radically different drugs illegal on the same grounds and punishable in the same ways? The difference between non-addictive hallucinogens and super-addictive narcotics, for instance, is enormous on many levels. Surely they don't pose the same threat to our individual or societal well-being. And if they do, on what grounds do we exclude alcohol or nicotine except by convention?

Third, and most forgotten or ignored in today's hysteria, the use of mind-altering substances can be an extremely positive experience. I do not mean just enjoyable. I mean spiritually enriching on many levels.

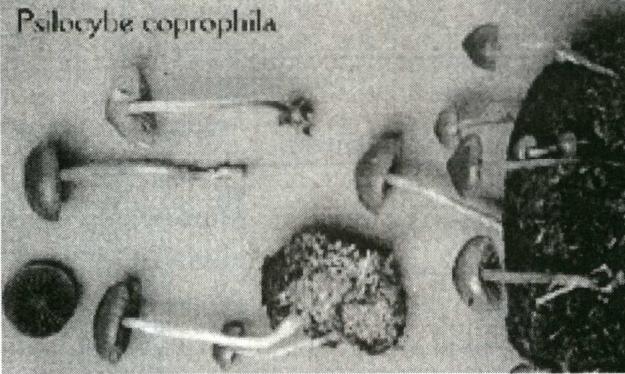
To even assert this last point nowadays is to be immediately ridiculed as a stupid pot head, a flake gone wrong, or some new age quack. People can understand legalization on the basis inefficiency arguments, on social libertine arguments, or even on the grounds that the war on drugs has done little but made us a more paranoid and hateful nation. But to say that the use of mind-altering substances is more than a tolerable form of self destruction—that it is an enriching experience that many people would benefit from were it legalized—is to immediately declare one's societal position as being in the extreme fringe.

Yet it is exactly this point—that some use of currently illegal drugs is truly beneficial for some people—that our society needs to understand. Without this understanding, both prohibition and legalization promise to be partially unsuccessful. To prohibit drug use without understanding why people use them often results in the disrespect for users' rights, regardless of whether they are creating any perceivable social harm. And to legalize drugs but still consider their use a social ill is to really not allow them to be incorporated into society. This just continues to marginalize users rather than expect them to use in appropriate ways. The threat of mandatory treatment for people who use drugs legally is just as obnoxious as their incarceration for illegal use.

Hallucinogenic drugs can take people from their more standard consciousness, in which they are purposeful, interpreting humans, to comparatively purposeless states of seemingly infinite being. In these states, that part of us which regulates our actions from the perspective of what is culturally acceptable, call it the superego if you like, loses much of its power over us. To this extent, people who "trip" or even get stoned feel free—at least, I do.

And there is a great deal of value to this freedom. Many people in our society, myself included, can get stuck in ruts in which everything we do is for the sake of something else: we sleep to be able to work the next day, eat to keep from feeling hungry, work because we have to, and look at people and even the world not in admiration but in terms of whether they meet some standards of ours or not. In this state, one can even become a captive of one's own mind, in which just sitting, listening, tasting, and feeling are overridden by a continuous bombardment of distracting thoughts and imperatives about other things one ought to be doing

Psilocybe coprophila



with one's time. As this occurs, it becomes is easy to forget the fact that we even exist, that we are mortal, and that to merely perceive the world and think about the world is an absurd and fantastic gift. We are taken out of the dark oneness that is death, but briefly—what a tragedy to not even see the light! And for some of those who are seriously conditioned to act rather than be, to see time in terms of commitments rather than a series of ever-moving presents, it may be that a hallucinogenic drug experience could allow them to see the light so that they could possibly appreciate their everyday existence more and change those parts of their lives which burden them and others.

When I tell some people this, they think me pathetic for placing so much value on a drug-induced experience. But these people are either closed-minded or have some other means of experiencing the mystery and wonder and love of being alive. Artists, musicians, dancers, the religious, the passionate, the committed, and the deeply caring have their ways of relating to the world. But many people don't. I was raised like millions of Americans—without serious commitment to anything in particular, without real appreciation of my own or others' existence—and thus developed an ability to do little else but compulsively and subconsciously try to gratify petty desires. Hallucinogenic drugs (as well as many other things I was doing before I tried them) provided a shock to my system, a wake-up call about something very wrong with the way I related to the world. And I believe that they could do the same thing, and that they have done the same thing, for huge numbers of people.

Think of the 1960s. Rock and roll changed radically in just a few years as hallucinogens became increasingly popular and available. Interest in Eastern and pagan religions, for better or for worse, mushroomed and eventually turned into the New Age movement. Timothy Leary and Aldous Huxley called for incorporation of hallucinogens into society as a means of making us less insane—i.e., less violent, less compulsive, less unreflective, less materialistic, and less bored and unhappy. It was Leary's belief that the youth, less set in their ways than the old white men running the country at the time, would learn valuable lessons from experiments with drugs and would radically change our world for the better within the next two generations.

What happened? How did we go from calls for spiritual revolution through drugs to fearing them so incredibly that giving someone any amount of non-addictive, mind-altering substances brings with it a minimum prison term of five years and maximum fine of \$50,000? Why did Leary's predictions fall so far short?

In terms of our fears, President Nixon was able to capitalize on anti-hippie sentiments and scapegoat them for our problems in Vietnam and at home. He called Leary "the most dangerous man in America,"

ironic for someone who illegally carpet-bombed Cambodia, was slow to pull out of Vietnam, and was so unscrupulous in his wish to spy on Americans that even J. Edgar Hoover wouldn't do his bidding. Drug laws became more severe as this scapegoating continued (though anti-marijuana laws were not enforced as strongly since white people were then associated with the drug's use). And president Reagan brought a similar wave of hate and intolerant laws against non-mainstream drug users—ironic, since his desire to fund a war Congress would not support helped exacerbate the drug problems in our country (see the "The Crack

How did we go from calls for spiritual revolution through drugs to fearing them so incredibly that giving someone any amount of non-addictive, mind-altering substances brings with it a minimum prison term of five years and maximum fine of \$50,000?

Conspiracy" on page 8 in this issue).

While fear of drugs increased, I'm not quite sure why interest in social change through drug use has decreased down to the efforts of Terence McKenna, a celebrated ethnobotanist, and a few others. Fear of bad trips and the unsuitability of some people for the hallucinogenic experience may be a part of it. The call for spiritual revolution certainly seems too demanding of people—too unrealistic to happen all at once. The laws as well as the propaganda against drugs may scare people. Further, some people take drugs like they drink beer—they sit around and talk, watch screen savers, and watch movies but still observe rather than participate in highly conscious being. The experience need not be rewarding for all people.

That there is not much of a movement specifically around drugs is probably for the best. The disciplined approach of reaching awareness through the arts or ritual seems far less disorienting, more safe, and more coherent with everyday experiences. We should not worry, then, if there is no popular call to use drugs. There is cause for alarm, however, if we spend our time beyond what is necessary to secure food and shelter in unfulfilling activities—in anti-life, so to speak. We should be alarmed if our education teaches us solely how to find hidden ideologies and historically locate all objects of our experience, and not to express love, appreciate being, or have concern for those who suffer unnecessarily. We should be alarmed if we are so extraordinarily busy doing that peace is a feeling we save for holidays. And if we collectively, as a society and as a nation, seem insane—if we torture animals for our well being, wage wars in the name of justice, make monetary profit our collective end, poison the planet we live on, enslave other peoples, and if we hate and fear one another—what a ridiculous absurdity it is that we then wage a war on drugs (legalized or not) that might possibly wake up the most spiritually retarded of us all! 

THE STRAIGHT EDGE ALTERNATIVE

A Few Simple Reasons *Not* to Do Drugs

BY JUSTIN TAMPLIN

I am straight edge. Straight edge is not something I chose to become; it was in me even before I happened to discover that someone had come up with a name for what I believe in and that there are other people out there who share the same beliefs.

You may have had experiences with straight edge people or bands before, but let's start from scratch here: Straight edge is not a social scene that one day you decide to "join." You don't just become straight edge for a few months and then decide that it is time to move on and experiment with the next trend. It is a way of life that comes from within yourself and is not what kind of music you listen to or who you hang out with. No matter how much you get made fun of, no matter how lonely or depressed you get, no matter how uncool you are, you know that you are doing the right thing and sticking to it.

To give some background, straight edge means different things to different people, but it has some basic, commonly held beliefs. It involves a lifestyle that abstains from alcohol, drugs, or any kind of intoxication. Most

straight edge people do not smoke or eat meat and are often involved in some kind of social movements like animal rights or environmentalism. Straight edge is a term that originated in the early '80s from the Washington, D.C., hardcore band Minor Threat. People who consider themselves straight edge are generally into hardcore and punk music. Many straight edgers draw big X's on their hands as a visible way to tell people about who they are. The X originated as a parody of the X's that bars would put on underage patrons. Thus the abbreviation "sXe," for "straight-edge," is now pretty common.

People often ask me if I am "allowed" to do this or that since I am straight edge. Straight edge isn't some club with official rules. It is different for every person. I first discovered the punk/hardcore scene in my hometown, Louisville, Kentucky, as a sophomore in high school. It has completely changed my life. Suddenly I saw that there was an alternative to the mainstream society that made me so uncomfortable. Here were a bunch of weirdos, nerds and freaks who couldn't deal with the "real world," or it couldn't deal

with them, but they had a place where everyone was accepted at face value. I had never seen people be so sincere and nice to each other. I can't begin to describe the wonderful feelings punk rock has given me. I became aware of what sXe was and it happened that most of the bands I liked were sXe themselves.

I never felt the need to call myself straight edge until my feelings against substance abuse grew stronger and stronger. It seemed that everyone I knew was falling into the "cool" society that promoted everything I am against, and I did not want to be associated with that society. So I started to call myself straight edge, so that I would have some way of separating myself from dominant society. Many people start to drink, smoke or do drugs when they are teenagers as a way to rebel. What they don't realize is that they are not rebelling against anything. They are in fact confirming that they are a part of this society that trains us to grow up into a certain lifestyle.

True rebellion is to think for yourself and decide what is right for you, and to stand up for what you believe no matter what other people say.

Over the years, I have seen more of the straight edge scene, and have become disillusioned with the current state of things. The image people now have of straight edgers is a bunch of macho tough guys who have no tolerance for people outside of their scene or for those who are not straight edge. Unfortunately, this attitude is more common now, but I do not accept it as what straight edge must become. I came to love sXe because the scene I knew was caring and supportive of everyone, whether they were straight edge or not. I sincerely hope that there are still kids becoming sXe now who are doing it for strong personal reasons, rather than because their favorite band says they should.

I could go on for days on specific reasons why I am so strongly opposed to the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and other substances. My primary reason stems from my beliefs about how I want to live my life. I want to have a clear mind and deal with myself and other people in as straightforward and honest a way as possible. I want to understand who I am and why I act the way I do, and if there is something I don't like about myself, I want to be able to change it so that I am a better person in the long run. Intoxication is a

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Straight edge group Endpoint performing for a sXe crowd.

means of running away so that you don't have to deal with reality.

Social drinking says to me that you are uncomfortable with yourself and the situation you are in, so you must use an artificial means to become comfortable. People say they drink to lower their inhibitions and relax, but if you are in a situation where you feel like you need something to help you be more comfortable, maybe you should stop and ask yourself why you are there in the first place. Why would you want to hang out in an environment where you can't be at ease with yourself? You will be much happier in the long run if you seek out situations and friends where you feel accepted for who you are and don't feel a need to change yourself to be accepted.

Countless studies have shown that alcohol and drugs are directly correlated with violent behavior. Any cop will tell you that most of the domestic violence and fights that they respond to are alcohol or drug related. Even here on Wesleyan's campus, the fights that do occur usually involve alcohol. Then there is the drunk driving issue. Anyone can have the best intentions not to drive when they are drunk, but when the time comes to make that decision, their judgment has been impaired and they don't realize that they are unfit to drive.

Drinking leads people to do things that they normally wouldn't, besides getting in fights and car wrecks. How often have you heard people use the fact that they were drunk as an excuse to avoid responsibility for their actions? From acting obnoxious and being disruptive to getting in fights and car accidents, these are all avoidable incidents that I don't think anyone will claim has added to the enjoyment of their drinking experience. Alcohol is also used to lower sexual inhibitions, which leads to all kinds of problems. When two drunk people hook up at a party, it is only a temporary thing. Their personalities and their perceptions of each other have been altered and will not last. They may have had a lot to talk about while they were drunk,

but when the alcohol wears off, they will have to deal with their real personalities, and often find that they really don't find the other person as interesting and engaging as they once did.

I have heard many good arguments for the use of drugs for personal exploration of the mind and consciousness, but I still don't believe that they are the way to achieve ultimate self-realization. Once again, the effect of the drug is temporary, and whatever state you may have reached will wear off eventually. I consider it a much more meaningful and impressive accomplishment to reach a transcendental state through meditation or other means which come from within yourself and your mind, rather than being caused by some outside chemical.

As far as smoking is concerned, it is just plain stupid. I try to listen to both sides of most arguments, but I cannot see any good reason to smoke. Why in the world would anyone ever intentionally inhale something that everyone knows will get them addicted and end up killing them? It makes you unhealthy, it smells awful, and wastes money. I just don't get it.

Yet another reason to abstain from drugs, alcohol, and smoking are the health effects. There are too many side effects to discuss, but is it really worth it to have a small amount of fun at the cost of getting addicted to something and causing your body to painfully deteriorate until you die? I think I'd rather have my fun in ways that I can continue as long as I live, that might even make me healthier in the end.

I want to point out that I am not totally closed-minded about the use of drugs by humans. The medicinal use of marijuana seems to have some legitimate benefits in fighting cancer, and if it really works, there should be no reason to prevent patients from using it. In addition, the use of industrial hemp as a fiber for the production of paper, clothes, and other products would have a positive effect on the environment. Hemp grows much faster and produces more biomass per acre than trees. It would provide an alternative crop to small farmers who are seeing their economic opportunities disappear as agriculture moves more and more toward huge industrial farming. The problem with industrial hemp legalization for non-drug purposes is that advocates frequently have obvious motives beyond commercial use and aren't taken very seriously.

I would like to see a society that doesn't teach people that they need to fit into some predetermined social mold. When we start to accept people for who they are and all of the diverse minds that are out there, people will have the confidence in themselves not to rely on using drugs and alcohol as a crutch to help them fit into a society that tells them they have to conform to some predetermined social image.

THE CRACK CONSPIRACY

How the Central Intelligence Agency let its agents bring crack cocaine into black America, and why you don't know about it.

B Y S A R A H W I L K E S

Between 1982 and 1986, America, especially poor, black America, experienced a huge flood of crack cocaine in its neighborhoods. For years people have been searching for someone to blame this problem on; seemingly outlandish claims such as space aliens or the Central Intelligence Agency masterminded the whole drug epidemic have easily been brushed aside as paranoid, lunatic, fringe gossip. It wasn't until this August, when The San Jose Mercury News published the results of a year-long investigation that some credibility began to be tacked on to the CIA rumor. Mercury News reporter Gary Webb wrote a three-part series detailing the intricate connections between the '80s crack explosion in South Central Los Angeles and other cities and the taxpayer-supported, juggernaut CIA.

In 1979 the U.S. supported Nicaraguan government led by dictator Antonio Somoza was violently overthrown by the Sandinistas, a socialist group. Shortly thereafter, around 1981, deposed Somoza supporters formed a guerrilla army called La Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense (FDN), better known in the U.S. as the Contras. The Contras were supported overtly by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in the name of stamping out socialism. But President Ronald Reagan gave the CIA only \$19.9 million in 1981 to cover the cost of overthrowing the Sandinista government. To the spy agency, this was clearly not enough to keep the Contras going. What to do?

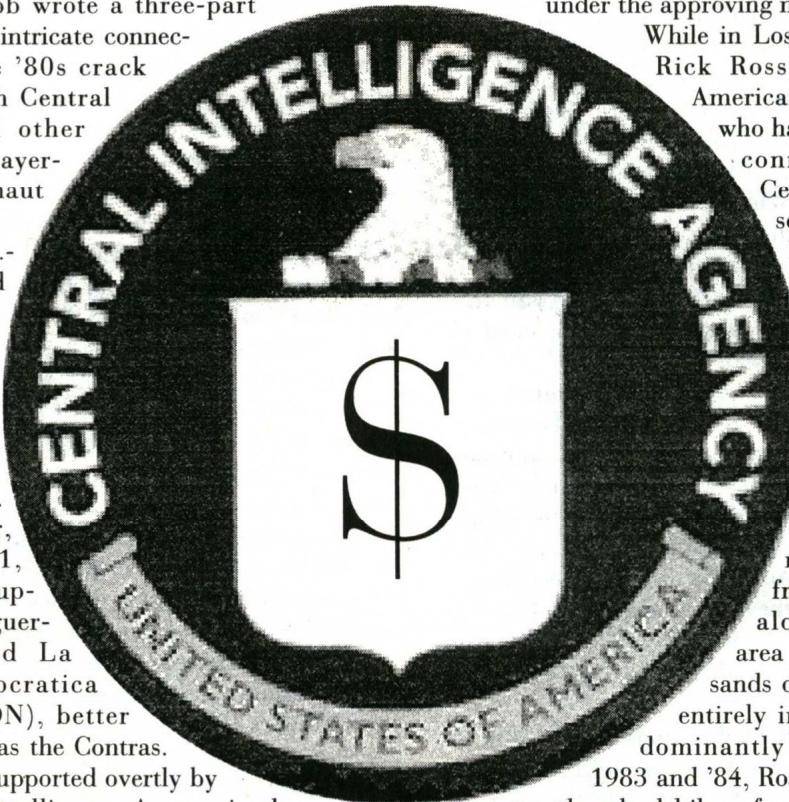
Enter Danilo Blandon and Norwin Meneses, two former minor Somoza government officials who wanted the Sandinistas out. When Somoza was thrown out, Blandon packed up his bags and headed for California. There, through some other exiled Nicaraguan friends, he met Meneses, who had been living in the U.S. for

several years. The two met in Honduras with Enrique Bermudez, a known CIA agent hired to revive Somoza's national guard, who encouraged the Nicaraguan exiles to raise money for the Contras by whatever means necessary. "There is a saying that the ends justify the means, and that's what Mr. Bermudez told us in Honduras, OK?" testified Blandon years later. Those "means," according to the San Jose Mercury News, turned out to be pumping thousands of kilograms of cocaine into the United States, and pumping millions of dollars out to the Contras, all under the approving nose of a CIA agent.

While in Los Angeles, Blandon met Rick Ross, a young, African-American trade school student who had gang and other street connections in South-Central L.A. Ross began selling cocaine supplied by Blandon, and by the mid-'80s Ross had become "Freeway Rick" Ross, crack kingpin and, with his new millions, real estate entrepreneur, owning chains of hotels, restaurants, and, earning his moniker, segments of freeways. Through Ross alone, the Los Angeles area saw an influx of thousands of kilos of crack, almost entirely into lower-income, predominantly black areas. Around 1983 and '84, Ross was "rocking up" up

to a hundred kilos of cocaine every week supplied by Blandon and distributing it through the Crips and Bloods, according to a DEA report of an interview with Blandon last year.

Why weren't Ross, Blandon, or Meneses caught when small-time dealers, who were almost all black men from low-income areas, were routinely apprehended by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and police and thrown in jail for huge lengths of time? Since 1974, the DEA had known that Meneses was involved in cocaine trafficking. On one occasion, a 1986 police raid on some of Blandon's drug dealing centers found



the places vacated, as if Blandon had known it was coming. Investigations on these men by the DEA, the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, U.S. Customs, and the California Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement were hampered by CIA pressure. "The cops always believed that investigation had been compromised by the CIA," L.A. federal public defender Barbara O'Connor told the *Mercury News*.

In 1986, at the height of Blandon's cocaine trafficking operations, Congress voted to authorize \$100 million of U.S. taxpayer money in military aid to the Contras. Blandon's "patriotism" for Somoza's

white powder plague for so long is now all but shrugging off these more recently revealed events.

The Mercury News stories were published August 18 through 21, 1996. In the newspaper and multimedia news world, no one raised an eyebrow. It wasn't until a full month later, after Webb's articles had inflamed several vocal Californian community groups and talk show DJs, when *The New York Times* gave a nod toward the story. On October 4, *The Washington Post* published an editorial criticizing not the Agency, but Webb and *The Mercury News*. The piece stated: "The articles [Webb's series] did not say directly that the

Reagan gave the CIA only \$19.9 million in 1981 to cover the cost of overthrowing the Sandinista government. To the spy agency, this was clearly not enough to keep the Contras going. What to do?

Nicaragua was no longer needed. Without the protection of the CIA, the key dealers, who continued to sell drugs, were soon dogged by police. Blandon himself told a federal grand jury in 1994, "When Mr. Reagan [got] in the power, we start[ed] receiving a lot of money, and the people that [were] in charge, it was the CIA, so they didn't want to raise any [drug] money because they...had the money that they wanted."

Today, Meneses, having escaped a lax Managua jail last year, is at large, Blandon is free and currently working as an informant for the DEA, and Ross is in jail, awaiting trial. In response to California Democrat Senator Barbara Boxer's demand that the CIA explain itself, Central Intelligence Agency director John Deutch unequivocally stated: "The Agency neither participated nor condoned drug trafficking by Contra forces. In particular, the agency never had any relationship with either Blandon or Meneses, nor did it ever have information concerning either of them in the trial of Rick Ross." It's certain that the Agency itself never actively participated in drug trafficking, but looking back at the actions and connections of Meneses et.al., it seems Deutch is using a pretty strange definition of "condoning."

"Turning a blind eye"? "Not stopping because it's raking in good money"? or is it Enrique Bermudez's "ends justifying the means"? Any way you read it, Deutch has a lot to answer for.

The crack epidemic might have come to black America anyway, without the help of "Freeway Rick" and his CIA-protected Nicaraguan suppliers, but it probably could not have come so quickly and with such force as it did. But why was all this ignored for so long? The same mainstream media which ignored the

spy agency knew about the two Nicaraguans' drug dealing, although the stories hinted strongly at CIA involvement." *Time* came up with a one-page article September 30, not focusing on the actions of the Agency and its Contra supporters, but on the increasing power of paranoid, black fringe groups who have taken up on this issue. This may actually be somewhat relevant since this "lunatic fringe," as *Time* calls it, seems to be right when it comes to the CIA.

Recently, the Agency acknowledged approving a shipment of cocaine into the U.S. ordered by a CIA-backed Venezuelan general as part of a plan to infiltrate Colombian gangs. The shipment came here because of "poor judgment and management on the part of several CIA officers," according to a statement by an agency spokesperson to the *New York Times*. If the Agency can admit this, proving that they are not above getting their hands dirty with cocaine, then shouldn't the *Mercury News* articles be taken a bit more seriously? Even in their own article about the Venezuelan incident, the *New York Times* quickly discredits the Contra story, calling it "seriously flawed."

The Central Intelligence Agency has had too much power for too long. The Cold War is long over, yet the Agency still exists. We may never get the full truth behind "Freeway Rick's" cocaine sources because the Agency holds exemptions from the Freedom of Information Act. If the CIA can do something as despicable as accepting money from drug traffickers to support a war few Americans even cared about, and destroying the lives of a significant segment of the very population the Agency is meant to protect, Americans, then our government needs to start reevaluating the need for such an institution.

Why was all this ignored for so long? The same mainstream media which ignored the white powder plague for so long is now all but shrugging off these more recently revealed events.



THE INTERNATIONAL

WAR ON DRUGS

Livia Gershon

Beginning on February 9, 1995, the Mexican military and police moved into areas of Chiapas held by Zapatista rebels. In the process, they raped, tortured, and killed guerrillas, the rebels' supporters, and entire populations of peasant villages. International human rights organizations confirmed the depth of abuse, contradicting government claims that rebels fabricat-

ed the stories. Observer organizations also reported that Salvador Morales Garibay, a "defected rebel" who the government reported had presented crucial evidence against the Zapatistas, later denied making the statements. Human rights groups reported similar claims about much of the testimony on which the military based its actions. The attacks focused international attention on conditions that Chiapas were already fully aware of: that the Mexican military is corrupt and repressive, and that the nation's government will defend military actions even if that means lying and fabricating evidence.

Just over a year later, in April 1996, the United States arranged a twelve-day training program for Mexican military officers paid for by the Pentagon and held at U.S. Army posts. According to an internet news

report, the purpose of the training was to "help the Mexican military support the Mexican police with rapid-reaction capability." The program was one of

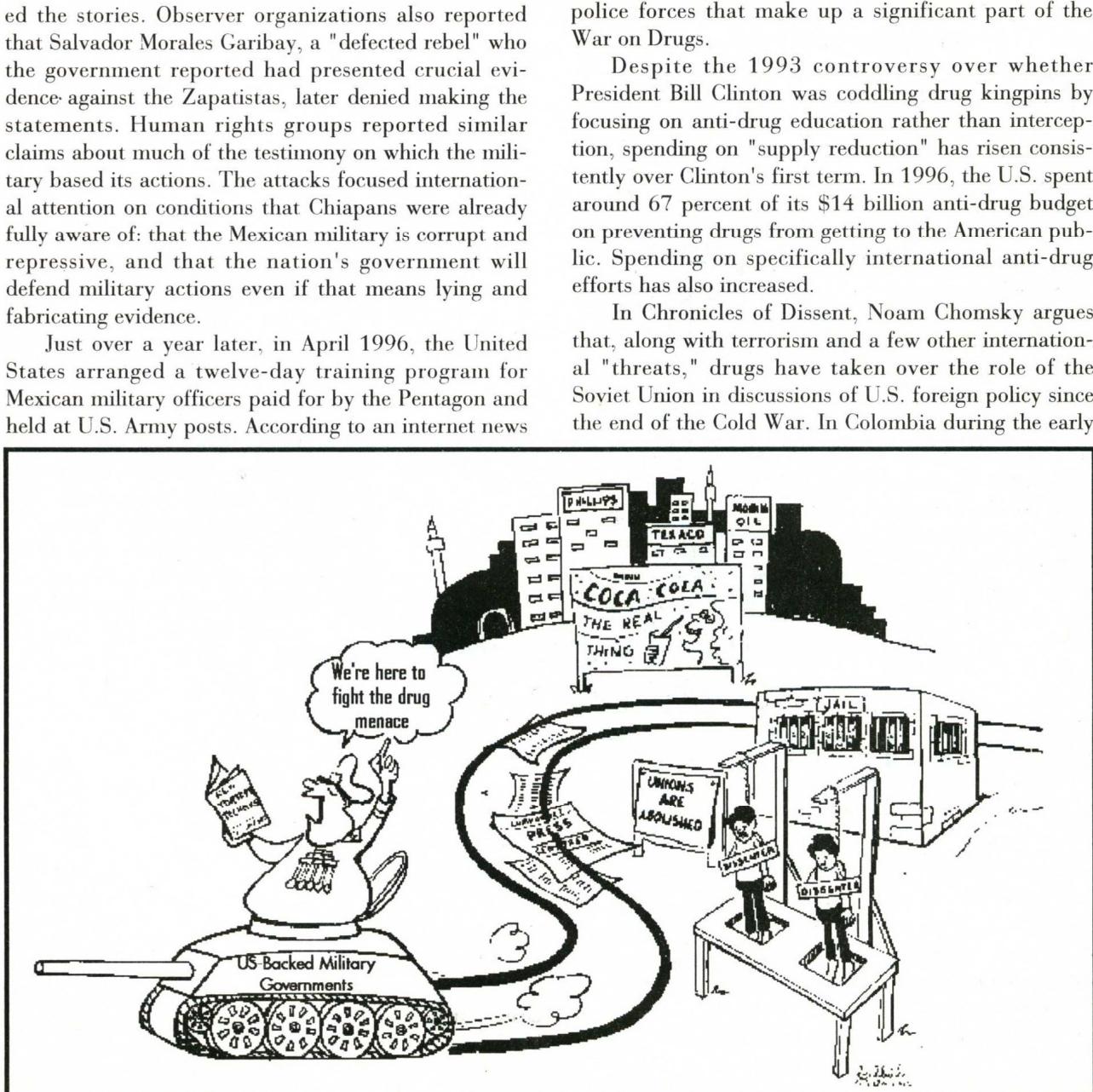
the support services for foreign militaries and

police forces that make up a significant part of the War on Drugs.

Despite the 1993 controversy over whether President Bill Clinton was coddling drug kingpins by focusing on anti-drug education rather than interception, spending on "supply reduction" has risen consistently over Clinton's first term. In 1996, the U.S. spent around 67 percent of its \$14 billion anti-drug budget on preventing drugs from getting to the American public. Spending on specifically international anti-drug efforts has also increased.

In *Chronicles of Dissent*, Noam Chomsky argues that, along with terrorism and a few other international "threats," drugs have taken over the role of the Soviet Union in discussions of U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. In Colombia during the early

The U.S. Must End Aid to Repressive Regimes



nineties, for example, leaders claimed they needed U.S. aid to fight drug lords. The U.S. provided Columbia's military with funding, which it used to create death squads, kill peasant leaders and political rivals, and continue its own drug trafficking. Since so many nations produce illegal drugs for export to the U.S., it becomes in our national interest to aid virtually any government supposedly

involved in anti-drug policing. This creates a simple way for officials to justify supporting the military of any nation, no matter what they actually do with it.

Besides direct military aid, the United States also uses bilateral sanctions, and pressures the United Nations to use multilateral sanctions, against nations that do not do enough to combat drug trafficking. These policies have been used since Nixon began the War on Drugs in the early '70s. Like military aid, sanctions have been used selectively to promote goals other than the elimination of drugs. The U.S. has frequently imposed sanctions on governments whose economic policies it opposes, supposedly for their lax drug policies. U.S.-supported

regimes with similar records on drug elimination receive no such sanctions. (And at the same time, the U.S. has also imposed sanctions on nations including Japan and South Korea to force them to accept U.S. tobacco.) Yet anti-drug sanctions have succeeded in driving many nations to create harsher penalties for drug-related offenses. Since the War on Drugs began, the number of nations using the death penalty against drug offenders has risen to twenty-four. Many of these

countries, including China and Malaysia have no fair trials and are well-known for human rights abuses. In Bolivia, largely because of U.S. policies, anyone arrested for any drug offense may be imprisoned without bail. In this criminal justice system that is widely believed to torture drug offenders, if a person imprisoned for these offenses is acquitted, they may still be held in jail until the case is reviewed by the nation's Supreme Court.

Probably the most memorable U.S. action against a drug exporting country in recent history was the 1989 invasion of Panama. Emanuel Noriega had been on the CIA payroll and had been involved in the drug trade for the entire time the agency employed him, until 1986, when they decided that he was becoming too powerful for them to use

effectively. At that point, the U.S. began pointing to his participation in drug trafficking, and by December 1989 the U.S. public perceived him as such a threat that the majority supported the invasion.

Ironically, aside from providing the demand that makes drug trafficking profitable, the U.S. also created

many of the economic policies that make many "third world" countries dependent on exporting drugs. U.S. subsidies to agribusinesses operating in poor nations support the large-scale growth of single crops for export over less centralized, more diverse subsistence agriculture. And U.N. agencies such as the World Bank demand that nations focus on producing goods for export. By arranging national economies in this way, the U.S. undercuts local farms and encourages peasants to seek out the best way to make a living in an international capitalist economy. In many cases that means producing drugs.

International military actions will never be an effective way of fighting drugs. As long as people want an illegal substance they'll be

able to get it; our leaders must have read enough Adam Smith to know that. But the War on Drugs will always be a good excuse for the U.S. to impose whatever policies it chooses on other nations, especially those with little economic power. To reduce the ability of U.S. officials to create unjust, capricious foreign policies, we should declare an end to the War on Drugs, at least the part of it that extends beyond our borders.

Along with terrorism and a few other international "threats,"

drugs have taken over the role of the Soviet Union in discussions of U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War



Caught in the Spider Web

the drug war hits close to home

Moss Williams

Friends, our government has wasted billions of dollars on its war on drugs. Thousands of those dollars have no doubt funneled in to the State of Montana's ingenious Project Spider Web. While grossly inefficient and abusive of civil liberties (whatever

happened to the 4th Amendment?), the arbitrary nature of when and how the "Spider Web" is cast underscores the insanity inherent in the drug war.

Project Spider Web, the brainchild of the US Customs Service, has been designed to apprehend Colombians, Japanese Yakuza, and other dangerous criminals/ road-tripping teenagers like my cousin Justin and me, from flooding across the Canadian border harboring "dangerous drugs"— like marijuana.

The Project proved to be a huge success on August 14, 1996, when 27.8 grams of a "green leaf substance" and a piece of "drug paraphernalia" were confiscated at the Port of Roosevelt, Montana. Unfortunately, they were our beautiful buds and broken rolling machine that they stole.

The Spider Web didn't seem so ominous as we approached the border to reenter the United States. We had been in Canada for about three days, and Justin and I were both running out of maple leaf jokes. We wouldn't have to joke much longer because a huge bearded man who looked like a cross between a lumberjack and a grizzly bear was simply waving the line of cars in front of us into the U.S. with little more than a "hello."

This flow was halted when my cousin pulled up to the tidy white guard house that stood on the longest "friendly" border in the world. The agent's demeanor quickly changed from Welcome Home to We Don't Like Your Kind In These Parts. He held up his thick paw and promptly demanded to know where we were from, how long we had been in Canada, and what we had been doing there. My cousin answered this stream of questions with only a hint of facetiousness while I browsed through Justin's book on the age of Jackson. The unsatisfied officer asked to see our ID's.

"Oh, shit!" my mind screamed.

"Pull in to that garage over there and turn off your

(the daring capture

of two dangerous

drug smugglers

engine." the Grizzly sternly demanded while pointing into a garage about the size of a small airplane hanger.

Justin did as he was told. I'm still not sure what I would have done if I had been driving. At the time I

wanted to take the wheel, race down the road a few miles, dump our stash and returned stupefied, stammering something feigning ignorance in a thick, southern accent.

"Whayull, I shore couldn't reckon why you was pointn' dowhn an ohpin rhode like theyut."

I wasn't driving, and I didn't lunge for the wheel, so I guess we'll never know.

"Where's the pot?" my cousin asked nervously. "In the trunk," I replied sullenly. "I'm such an idiot."

You see, there

were much better places in the old Nissan Maxima for an ounce of marijuana. There is an empty compartment below the tape deck that looks like a component of the sound system. It's where our shrooms and travelers checks were stashed. In my laziness and stupidity I didn't even think to put the weed in there that morning even though we had planned to cross the border.

"I'm such a fucking idiot!" I yelled.

A slender gray haired man immediately met our car as we rolled into the garage. He asked us to get out of the car and open the hood and the trunk. He proceeded to ask a barrage of questions— did we have any weapons, cigars, grapefruits? We replied (truthfully) that we had none of the above and at this point he asked us to go over to the counter protruding from one of the barren walls to fill out a standard Customs form. I was pretty nervous, well aware of the

There were much better places in the old Nissan Maxima for an ounce of marijuana. There is an empty compartment below the tape deck that looks like a component of the sound system. That's where our shrooms and traveler's checks were stashed.

inevitable, and I tried to keep my hands from shaking as I filled out the form. Before I could finish, the gray haired Goat approached my side, triumphantly displaying my rolling machine.

"What's this?" he asked, thumbing at the broken buds in the joint roller.

Frozen, I couldn't even open my mouth.

"This is marijuana, isn't it!" he proclaimed.

"I don't think so, sir." I replied as coolly as possible.

"There's gotta be some more where this came from," he said to the other agents. He asked me to empty my pockets before directing me to a small cell off the front wall of the hangar. I walked into the cell and he stood at the door asking me to take off my shirt.

"Now, take off your pants," he ordered. "Drop your drawers. Now, turn around and bend over."

The thought of having my ass prodded by a federal agent was dehumanizing. I was being raped by the government. Before long he seemed satisfied and told me to put my clothes back on. He went through the same process with Justin while I read his book about Andrew Jackson, the man of the people.

"This so humiliating," my cousin kept repeating.

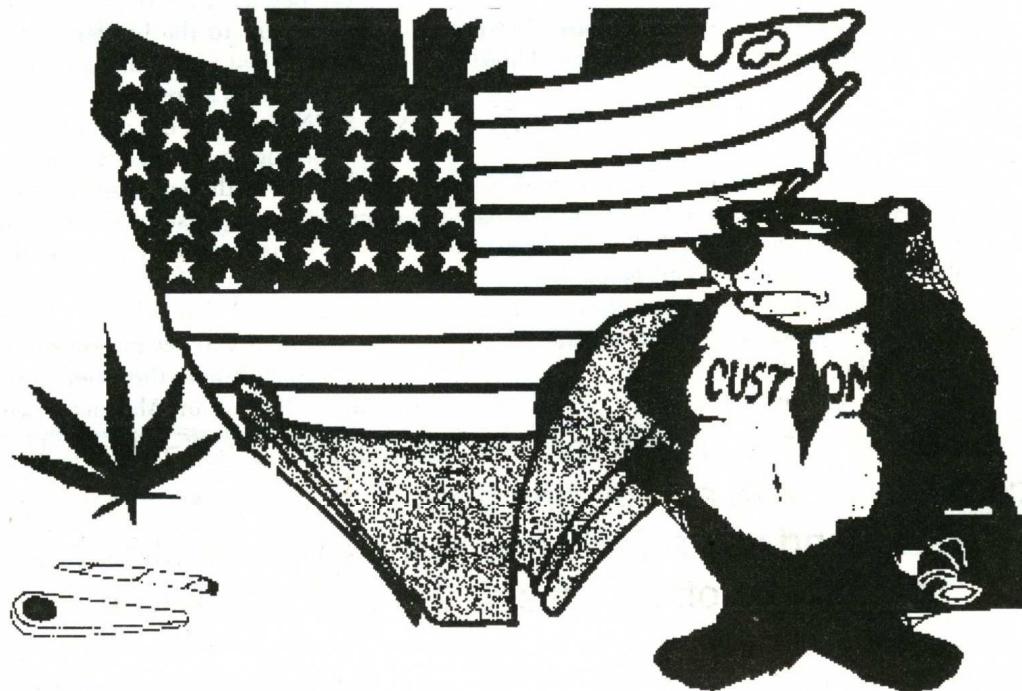
"This is what you get for having drugs, son," the Goat replied.

As I was reading, I occasionally glanced up to watch Grizzly and one of his cohorts methodically search every inch of my car. They unloaded all of our luggage and equipment onto the garage's metal tables. Before sifting through our gear they checked under the hood and inside my seats. For some reason Jackson's struggle with the National Bank charter made me start to giggle. In 1836 politicians and citizens alike argued the federal government should not have the power to control our country's banking system. In 1996, no politician would dare suggest our drug laws give the federal government too much power, even though a federal agent has the power to look for stray joints inside my cousin's anus.

Finally, they pulled our stash out of my duffel bag and promptly escorted us inside the customs building. Before we had time to strategize we were placed in separate, sound-proof interrogation rooms. My room was painted an ugly lime-yellow. Three metal chairs were the only furniture, one for me and two for my interrogators. It was like something out of Stalinist Russia. After a minute or two Grizzly and the Goat entered my cell and sat down in front of me with foreboding faces. I thought they were trying to intimidate me, so I played along, pretending to shiver. Grizzly demanded to know where the drugs had come from and all the

usual narc questions (going after the source). I had heard better cross examinations from high school debaters, and knowing (well, hoping) my cousin would be smart enough not to say anything (He wasn't a virgin of the criminal justice system), I decided to do some damage control. The logic was simple. We couldn't both get out of this one, but some theatrics and a tight story could save us a criminal record and several hundred dollars to boot. Besides, with five minutes of preparation this whole thing could have been avoided; it was my fault. So I took the fall.

"Well officer, (sob) the worst part about this is



that I dragged my cousin, (gasp) into this whole thing. I mean, I'm the only drug abuser here (sniffle). That's why I kept the marijuana in my clothes bag, so he wouldn't see it. He didn't know anything about it, believe me, (sigh) please."

"You need to worry about yourself right now, young man," Grizzly said.

Maybe I was too dramatic. Who actually says stuff like that? Regardless, the agents seemed satisfied with their interrogation, and they left my cell to ask to visit my cousin.

My cousin was alone in similar accommodations. Like I had hoped, he refused to answer their questions without a lawyer present. The Goat then informed him that I had taken responsibility for the charges.

"He told me I was free to leave, but where the hell did he think I was going to go?" Justin told me later.

Justin went outside to smoke some cigarettes by the car while the Goat slowly filled out the paperwork necessary before I was to be turned over to the police.

"About an hour after they let me go, a Volkswagen bus came across the border and the driver yelled 'hang in there brother!'" Justin said. "I was really worried

for you until they escorted you out to get your shoes and travelers checks. You waved at me with a big grin on your face and then started laughing as you approached, you looked like you were having a great time in there".

Not a great time, but I certainly made the most of it. I figured as long as I was busted, I'd get a few punches in.

"Where do you guys get those great uniforms?".

Grizzly said they had to order them and sometimes they traded hats and such with other departments.

"So you could trade for a D.E.A. hat?"

No response.

"You know, it's really a shame you guys are probably going to incinerate that marijuana. Those are beautiful buds. Some of the best stuff I've ever smoked."

Again, no response.

The Goat, still filling out his forms, told me he had the power to confiscate my car, but being the benevolent officer he was, if I filled out a "mitigation of forfeitures" application, I could be off with a \$500 fine from the Customs Service, go down and pay a \$150 fine at the Eureka police station, and be off by sunset. Too good to be true.

This is what I wrote on my plea:

If I filled out a "mitigation of forfeitures" application, I could be off with a \$500 fine from the Customs Service, go down and pay a \$150 fine at the Eureka police station, and be off by sunset. Too good to be true.

I need to be in Middletown, CT in twelve (12) days to begin my second year of college at Wesleyan University. I would also like to go home to Nashville, TN before the fall term begins. It would be very difficult to get to these destinations without my car. Besides, I really love my car, and the thought of it being given away at a government auction would bring tears to my eyes. I hope the following reasons justify this request. Thank You.

The Goat and Grizzly had both left the room, and the copier in the corner was too tempting. I made a xerox and put it in my pocket. Then, getting carried away, I ripped another form from the Goat's pad and started to write.

"The thought of being stuck in this god forsaken shithole you call a US Customs Service office..."

I heard footsteps and tried to stuff the second form into my pocket, but the Goat had already seen it

"What did you just put in your pocket."

"Nothing, sir"

"I saw you put a piece of paper into your pocket. Let me see what you've got there."

"I can't do that."

"Yes you can. That's federal property, now I have to see it."

My mind was racing. Should I eat it? "Uhm, I'm sorry, it was kind of rude, but, I mean, it sucks getting arrested."

"Let me see the paper, son."

An idea. "How about I go over to that wastebasket, rip it up into tiny pieces and neither of us will have to know what it said"

"All right."

I watched my step after that. They finally called the deputy sheriff of Roosevelt to come down and arrest me. I guess the "pay the fine and be on your way" was another lie. Well, all said, I think my lies were better. After taking a shower, the deputy made his way up to the border. Before he arrived, Grizzly and the Goat took a moment to celebrate.

"You did a great job today," said the Goat.

"No, no, you did all the work." Grizzly replied

Seeing that I was watching this pathetic episode, the Goat bothered to explain to me that this was an unusually big bust for this port of entry

"Usually we only get five or six grams at a time, if we're lucky."

I wanted to throw up.

They finally let my cousin inside to wait with me. We talked about the finer points of Arlo Gutherie's Alice's Restaurant Massacree while waiting for officer

Obie to come and arrest me. Obie didn't disappoint.

The 5' 10", 250 pound deputy lumbered into the Customs House with a lawful gait.

This was going to be a long afternoon. He held up the 27.8 grams of marijuana as far away from his body as his pudgy arms would allow like it was a bag full of smelly shit.

He read me my rights, and charged me with possession of "dangerous drugs" and "drug paraphernalia." He set my bail for \$450.

"You're well on your way to a felony in this state" Obie warned, before asking me if I would answer his questions.

"Well, I guess that depends on what you've got to ask me"

"It doesn't depend on anything. You either speak to me or you don't."

"Well, in that case, I guess I don't have anything to say to you."

The fat deputy approached me, "I don't normally do this, but I'll give you the option of wearing cuffs or not."

"I want the whole experience. Why don't you give me the cuffs," I said, holding out my arms.

The pig put his hand on my shoulder. "I don't think that's necessary. You don't look like a threat to run away."

He led me out to the car. I asked him if he'd turn

the lights while he drove me to the station, but he wouldn't respond. I waved to Justin from the back of the police jeep, and he gave me a reassuring grin.

At the station I asked for my phone call.

"What did you guys do?" my uncle asked.

"Well, allegedly, customs found some pot in our car. What should I do now?"

"Don't say anything. Try and find a local lawyer that knows how things work up there. Call me back later."

"Uhm"

"Uhm what son," the pig demanded.

"Uhm, My lawyer says I shouldn't say anything to you"

But I couldn't help it, this guy was too much. He had a hunting season calendar hung over his desk. The thought of this guy dressing up in camouflage and smearing his body with fox piss to go out and shoot deer with a semi-automatic rifle made me ill. Guys like this act like they're out there to kill invading Russians.

"So, you hunt."

"I don't have much time for hunting anymore now that I'm the Deputy Sheriff."

"Well, personally I think murdering defenseless animals is a far more heinous crime than smoking a joint."

I was hoping he'd punch me, but he just explained to me that "what you people want" is THC and it isn't found in high enough quantities in "natural plants." Hmm. I asked him if knew about William Randolph Hearst and his yellow journalist crusade against the "evil weed from Mexico." After a few more non sequitur responses from my opponent, I gave up arguing and went back to good old ad hominims.

Fingerprinting wasn't nearly as much fun as I had anticipated. Before each set Obie would tell me where they were going: The town of Roosevelt, the county, The State of Montana, and yes friends, the FBI.

"This is going to stay with you for along time son. Probably the rest of your life. Now put your fingers together."

"Heil Hitler!" I replied.

"Excuse me?"

"I was referring to the way the Nazis used to salute their leader." I said, waiting to get decked to the floor.

"You need to start taking this a little more seriously son, or this isn't going to be the last time you find yourself arrested."

"I'm really trying to take this seriously."

"And besides, the Nazis didn't use four fingers," he said after a brief pause.

"Uhm, how many fingers did they use?"

"They used their whole hands," he said, squeezing my wrist so hard the bones in my hand felt like they would break.

A couple of hours later my bail was posted. I was exhausted and distressed. I didn't appreciate "Alice's Restaurant" as much I thought I would when Justin and I had agreed to play it every time we had a run in with the law.

We bought bananas and bread at the local grocery store before finding a hideout in a national forest a couple miles from Eureka. It was Friday night, and we had to wait until Monday to talk to a lawyer.

My lawyer was wonderful. A local outside the gas station in town overheard our conversation, between my cousin and I, and he came up to us and told us not to worry, Don Shaffer was our man.

"We've all been caught coming across that border,

"A friend of mine and I thought about putting up a huge sign right before the boarder saying 'dump your dope,' but I don't know what the Canadians would think about that," he said.

don't let it ruin your day."

Don Shaffer was our man. I left Justin at the hideout Monday morning and raced the 50 miles to Shaffer's office. A sixty-year-old man with long white hair and a spirited grin met me with a Camel in hand, and asked me what we had been thinking when we decided to cross the border with stuff in our car.

"A friend of mine and I thought about putting up a huge sign right before the border saying 'dump your dope,' but I don't know what the Canadians would think about that," he said.

We talked about the case for about five minutes. The rest of the time he chain smoked and talked about whatever came to mind. He remembered that he knew someone from Wesleyan, and he had his secretary call around town to find out whose niece or granddaughter it was. He told me to go play and come back in the afternoon to sign an agreement with the DA.

What had Project Spider Web accomplished? It drenched an amazing road trip, and incinerated an ounce of marijuana. I wonder if our fines even paid for all the man-hours that went into my arrest and body cavity search. This sure didn't restore my confidence in our government's ability to protect basic liberties and the pursuit of happiness. Yet my story pales in comparison to others whose lives have been utterly destroyed by our tyrannical drug laws.

Be careful out there.



Drug War Delirium

Rethinking Federal Drug Sentencing Laws

Brian Edwards-Tiekert

If you are convicted of smuggling explosives or firearms into a federal prison, you must serve a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years without parole. If you're caught smuggling a hit of acid in, it's twenty years. Sentencing for crack possession is 100 times as harsh as that for crack cocaine, even though they're essentially the same drug. For illegal possession of cocaine, the federal sentencing guideline is thirty years in prison. For the illegal possession of a nuclear warhead, it's twelve.

Do our priorities seem misplaced? Indeed they should.

Our criminal justice system is plagued with problems. We have the highest per capita prison population in the world and still can't seem to put a dent in our crime rate. Our courts are clogged and backlogged; our prisons are crowded far beyond capacity. Every day we parole hundreds of criminals determined to be at 'high risk' to society—rapists, arsonists, and murderers, among others.

Our sentencing laws are contradictory, impractical, and biased. Our "tough on drugs" approach has backfired. Instead of putting more criminals behind bars, we've wound up paroling violent criminals to make room for victims of our system of justice.

Why?

Over 60% of the inmates in our federal prisons are incarcerated on drug charges. They're there because of harsh minimum sentencing laws that have been in place since the mid-'80s. These laws create minimum sentences that prisoners must serve once convicted, no room for discretion on the part of the judge, no chance at parole. Period. End of sentence.

Over 50 of the 680 federal judges now refuse to hear drug cases because they refuse to apply what they consider overly harsh charges. These laws are in most cases far more severe than the state laws which they supplant. For instance, a marijuana cultivation offense which would result in no more than a small

fine and probation by New York State Law, carries a mandatory minimum of five years' imprisonment in a federal court.

Between 1980 and 1990, drug convictions increased over 400%. More and more frequently, such cases are turned over to federal courts, clogging the court system as well as the prisons (which currently average over 50% beyond capacity). This influx of unparoleable inmates in already crowded prisons necessitates the early parole of other criminals. In other words, we wind up letting muggers, rapists, etc. loose to keep non-violent people in prison because the law leaves no other option. The gung-ho "War On Drugs" ethic that carried our politicians through the '80s has come to compromise the effective functioning of our entire criminal justice system.

But the problem with our sentencing laws extends further than these practical issues. Some laws are simply ill-conceived: Since LSD quantity is determined by the weight of the medium it's present in,

possession of two doses on sugar-cubes is equivalent to two hundred doses on blotter paper in the eyes of the law—both result in a minimum ten-year sentence. Disparities in cocaine sentencing laws bring up issues of class-

and race-based bias in the eyes of the law.

It shouldn't be surprising: Our nation's drug policies have long been intertwined with its prejudices. Heavy anti-Chinese sentiment around 1900 was invoked in the campaign to ban opium. The plant widely recognized (and used) as "hemp" was rechristened "marijuana" to build on anti-Mexican sentiments when it was criminalized in the 1930s. The crack epidemic in the '80s came to be associated in the media with poor minority neighborhoods, and the resultant bias was expressed in laws passed in 1986 and 1988.

The breakdown is simple: Five grams of crack cocaine (ten doses' worth, \$50 street value), results in

a five-year mandatory minimum sentence. It takes 500 grams to get the same sentence for possession of powder cocaine. That amounts to 5,000 doses or around \$50,000 street value. Under these laws it's quite possible for low-level crack dealers to be punished much more severely than the wholesale suppliers of the cocaine the crack is made from.

Issues of race become clearer when one examines the court records: 88.3% of all federal crack defendants are black, whereas almost two thirds of crack users are white, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Blacks comprise only 27% of powder cocaine convictions. The facts speak for themselves.

The disproportionately harsh laws supposedly instituted to stop the spreading 'epidemic' of crack through poor communities have only served to devastate those communities in another way: By breaking up families and communities through widespread incarceration of individuals in possession of petty amounts of drugs in areas where few other sources of viable income exist.

It's long since time we re-thought our

approach to criminal justice in regards to drug offenses. Our sentencing laws are contradictory, impractical, and biased. Our "tough on drugs" approach has back-fired. Instead of putting more criminals behind bars, we've wound up paroling violent offenders to make room for victims of our system of justice. Our justice system itself has been victimized; the authority of federal justices has been usurped, the federal court system drowned by the increasing burden of drug cases. Instead of saving communities we're destroying them.

Is drug use a problem that merits the amount of resources we've put into its persecution? It seems we've lost all sense of perspective in regards to this. Sentencing reform has gained increasing support among the law-enforcement community as well as the legal community—groups that see first-hand how our policies in the "War On Drugs" have failed. Drug users have too long been scapegoats for politicians trying to prove that they're "tough on crime." We need prevention instead of incarceration, jobs instead of jails. Most importantly, we need to wake up to the fact that we can't solve all our problems by declaring war on them.



Connecticut Drug Law

Compiled by Trevor Griffey

Wesleyan does a reasonably good job of printing drug laws in the blue book, but after fact checking with Connecticut state law, it seems that some of the omissions Wesleyan made would warrant printing all the relevant content of Connecticut statutes 21a 240-280.

Connecticut state law defines the abuse of drugs as "the use of controlled substances solely for their stimulant, depressant, or hallucinogenic effects upon the higher functions of the nervous system." It defines hallucinogenic substances as "psychodysleptic substances which assert a confusional or disorganizing effect upon mental processes or behavior and mimic acute psychotic disturbances."

After these purely medical and unbiased definitions, Connecticut laws address the manufacture of drugs. Manufacture is defined as any kind of growing, creating/preparing, or even the "extraction of substances from their natural origin." The penalty for non-drug-dependent people that manufacture, possess or transport more than one ounce of heroin, methadone, or cocaine or a substance with five or more miligrams of LSD with intent to sell or give to someone else is a minimum jail term of five to twenty years and a maximum term of life imprisonment. For any narcotic, hallucinogen other than pot, amphetamine, or one kg of pot, the penalty for a first offense is a prison sentence of five to twenty years, and for each subsequent offense, is ten to twenty years. If the person you give

or sell to is under eighteen and two years younger than you, add a mandatory two years more. If you are within one-thousand five hundred feet of any adequately labeled day care center (like the one on Williams st), public housing project (like the one next to Low Rise), or public school, add another mandatory three more years. If the person you give or sell to is under eighteen and was persuaded, coerced, or enticed to use drugs by you, add another mandatory three years.

You're still in trouble if you don't deal or share drugs cause there are possession laws. First offense possession of any amount of narcotic will bring with it no more than seven years in jail and/or a fifty thousand dollar fine. Second offense will bring not more than fifteen years and/or one hundred thousand dollar fine. Any subsequent offense will bring no more than 25 years and/or a fine of \$250,000. First offense for any amount of hallucinogenics other than marijuana and more than four ounces of marijuana is no more than five years and \$2000 fine, with subsequent offenses being not more than 10 years and \$5000 in fines. If it's less than four ounces of pot, it's a maximum of one year in jail and \$1000 fine, with subsequent offenses being maximum \$3000 and five years in prison. And if you possess any amount of any illegal mind-altering substance within 1500 feet of any school or day care center, that's a mandatory prison term of two years in addition to any other offense.

We are Number One

CRIME, PRISON AND POVERTY

Laura Clawson

You might have heard that the U.S. has a big problem with crime and the only way to stop it is to build more prisons and arrest and convict more people to fill them. You might have heard that there's a drug crisis and the only way to stop it is to make the punishments for drug-related offenses harsher and harsher. You might have some idea that the federal government and the individual states have been doing that—putting more and more people in prison, and building prison after prison to hold them—and that, as it became clear that just putting people away wasn't enough, they've experimented with the ways they do it by implementing mandatory sentencing laws, three strikes and you're out laws, and boot camps. And oddly enough, this hasn't worked either. These policies, which are often presented as necessities rather than choices, have failed to substantially reduce violence and drug use in the United States. Crime rates have dropped some over the past few years, but those reductions haven't kept

pace with the money being spent on criminal justice.

As Elliott Currie points out in *Confronting Crime: An American Challenge*, "we have become a country in which it is possible to be sentenced to a year behind bars for stealing six dollars' worth of meat from a supermarket, but we are still by far the most dangerous society in the developed world."

In 1970, 96 of every 100,000 Americans were in prison. In 1980, 195 of every 100,000 were. (These figures include people in state and federal prisons, but not those in local jails.)

In 1990, \$18 billion was spent on prison construction and operation in the United States. In 1991, most states still suffered from overcrowded prisons.

By the end of the 1980s, the United States triumphed over the Soviet Union and South Africa, gaining the distinction of incarcerating the greatest proportion of its citizens.

In spite of this massive rate of incarceration:

In the early 1980s, fewer Canadians were killed by all means put together than Californians were killed with knives.

Washington, D.C., (population approximately 600,000), had more drug-related killings than all of Scandinavia, with a population of 18,000,000, had murders of any type in 1988.

(From Elliott Currie, *Confronting Crime: An American Challenge* and *Reckoning: Drugs, the Cities, and the American Future*.)

So what's being done in this country to stop crime isn't really working. But according to a lot of people, it's the only thing that can be

THIS MODERN WORLD

MANY AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT THE ANSWER TO SOCIETY'S PROBLEMS IS SIMPLE--WE'VE JUST GOT TO GET TOUGH ON CRIMINALS!



UNFORTUNATELY LIFE TENDS TO BE A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT (AS THOSE OF YOU OVER THE AGE OF 15 MAY HAVE NOTICED BY NOW)... AND IN REALITY, MANDATORY SENTENCING LAWS HAVE LED TO ASTONISHING INJUSTICES...

FOR INSTANCE, AS NEWSWEEK RECENTLY NOTED, RAPISTS ARE ROUTINELY SET FREE AFTER FOUR YEARS -- BUT A NUMBER OF PRISONERS CONVICTED OF NOTHING MORE SERIOUS THAN SELLING MARIJUANA ARE DOING LIFE WITH-OUT PAROLE...

IN CALIFORNIA, THE PRISON GUARD'S UNION WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE "THREE STRIKES" INITIATIVE -- WHICH HAS, OF COURSE, LED TO THE BUILDING OF MORE PRISONS (AND THE HIRING OF MORE GUARDS)... NOW THE HEAD OF THE UNION HAS THE CHUTZPAH TO COMPLAIN THAT PRISONS ARE FILLING UP WITH "HARDCORE CRIMINALS WHO HAVE NO HOPE AND NOTHING TO LOSE..."

--NECESSITATING, COINCIDENTALLY ENOUGH, STILL MORE GUARDS...
IS IT JUST ME, OR IS THE TAIL WAGGING THE DOG HERE?

ANOTHER POINT TO CONSIDER IS THAT WHEN THE KEY HAS BEEN THROWN AWAY, THE PRISONERS STILL NEED TO BE TAKEN CARE OF... AND AT THIS RATE, OUR NATION'S PRISONS ARE GOING TO START TURNING INTO RETIREMENT HOMES WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DECADES...

NURSE...WHAT WAS IT I DID AGAIN?
OH, YOU WERE VERY BAD...YOU SOLD SOME MARIJUANA TO SOMEONE, FORTY OR FIFTY YEARS AGO! --NOW TAKE YOUR MEDICINE FOR ME, OK?

done, and other solutions are only supported by tree-hugging, bleeding-heart liberals who care more about striped slugs than they do about honest, virtuous Christian folks and who might enjoy being in prison themselves on account of what men do to each other in there. If you catch my drift.

There is just one little problem with the position that the only way to maintain low crime rates is to put people in prison in huge numbers: If it were true, you'd think that the U.S. would have to give up its top ranking (among developed nations) in either murder or incarceration. So how is it that Sweden has about a fifth of the U.S. murder rate and, in the early 1980s, had an incarceration rate of only 55 people per 100,000? There is certainly more than one reason for this difference, but poverty might just be a big one. Even before the cuts in social services that took place in the 1980s (never mind the ones we're in the middle of right now), "families with children in the United States were three times as likely to be poor after [income benefits and taxes] as families in Sweden." When you put that together with all the studies that show that poverty increases crime (including one that found that "each ten-dollar-per-month increase in payments per family member under Aid to Families of Dependent Children . . . cut the urban homicide rate by about 1 per 100,000"), you wonder a little less about that U.S.-Sweden contrast.

My conclusion here, indeed the only sensible conclusion, is obvious: the U.S. needs to do something

about poverty if it wants to reduce crime by any significant amount. If this decision was made and the government acted to implement it, the U.S. could afford to increase social services—including health care, job training and creation, better schools, more unemployment compensation—with the money that's being spent to support the current decision about how to decrease crime. (This decision seems to be that all the young black men in this country need to be locked up—a study by the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, which was reported in *The New York Times* in April 1992, showed that on any given day of the previous year, 42% of the black men age 18-35 in Washington, D.C. were in some way enmeshed in the criminal justice system.) The United States is, quite simply, spending an almost unimaginably huge amount of money to keep people locked up. It costs around \$25,000 a year to keep someone in jail, and we're putting people in jail as fast as we can, but for some reason, AFDC benefits of less than \$300 a month for an entire family are too much? Does this make sense?

If poverty were less prevalent in this country and people getting out of prison could find work and dignity, the U.S. might no longer be able to maintain those top rankings in both incarceration and murder. I personally am not so much of a patriot that I insist on clinging to such distinction.



Drug Laws, Prisons, and Poverty

From *Reckoning: Drugs, the Cities, and the American Future*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993:

"When the war on drugs began during the Nixon administration in the early 1970s, it absorbed about \$200 million a year. By 1992, we were spending nearly \$13 billion at the federal level alone, not counting the vast sums poured into the drug war by the states, cities, and counties—and the figure was still rising. Most of that money—roughly 70 percent during the Bush administration—has gone for police, courts, and prisons, and to a lesser extent for such related purposes as military aid to source countries and the 'interdiction' of drugs at the borders."

"Nationally, between 1980 and 1989 alone, drug arrests increased by 105 percent. But even that figure understates the escalation of the criminal justice system response to hard drugs, because it encompasses a slightly declining rate of arrests for marijuana offenses. . . In 1980, about 11 out of every 100,000 Americans were arrested for the sale or manufacture of heroin; by 1989, about 100 out of 100,000 were—an increase of over 800 percent. In California, the adult arrest rate for felony narcotics offenses increased threefold and the juvenile rate sixfold between 1983 and 1988. There is a common assumption that most drug arrests are for high-level drug trafficking. But more than twice as many people are arrested for possessing heroin or cocaine than for selling or manufacturing them; and the rate of those arrests, too, also shot up by over 800 percent from 1980 to 1989."

"The backlog of drug cases in the federal courts increased sixfold between 1989 and 1991 alone, despite a more than 80 percent increase in the courts' budget. The average sentence imposed for drug-related offenses of all kinds lengthened by a third from 1980 to 1986 (twice as much as for other crimes) and by about a third since."

"Drug commitments are one of the main reasons for the quintupling of California's prison population from about 20,000 in 1979 to over 100,000 by early 1991—roughly the number behind bars in Great Britain and West Germany combined. More men are now in prison in California for drug offenses than were behind bars for all crimes in 1980; a fourth of the men and two-fifths of the women in the state's prisons are drug offenders."

Portrait of a Family

Patty and I stand in the field at the end of a half-circle of pines. One star in the South and one in the East shine in the pale sky, the last of the sun glinting off the bay. We are collecting black-eyed susans for the party tonight: Dory, her daughter, has graduated from eighth grade.

"Hard to believe she'll be in high school," Patty says, picking two blueberries and handing me one.

"I know," I say. "I still remember baby-sitting for her and playing Nancy Drew Meets Barbie in Hollywood. I think we made the ducks be Ned and Ken."

Patty laughs and looks across the field to my house, half wooden shingle, half painted brown. "Well I remember when a little girl with her hair in curlers

John was abusive, everyone agreed, but how and to whom no one told.

used to ski over here just to show me her nail polish. And that wasn't all so long ago."

"It feels like ages." I look at my house, where my mother is shelling peas and my father is reading, my brother collecting scrap wood for his fort; my house which has sprung up and out since we moved there sixteen years ago. "I wish I could remember more."

"They were pretty crazy, your parents, your house was quite the scene when Wendy and Carl first came." We begin to walk the arc of the pines, searching for flowers. "I used to stand on my porch and see your house in the night when there was a party and not believe how much noise there was. I thought I was a drinker." She shakes her head. "Until those days, when I met Wendy and Carl and Katie and John and Jeff—I just couldn't believe it." She stoops for her basket. "Things changed pretty fast though, you know, when it all came down."

We gather our flowers and clippers and walk toward her house. At the edge of the field, next to Patty's driveway, squats a two-person tent full of clothes and some books, a battery lamp, a portable radio, two pillows, and Katie, burrowed in her sleeping bag. She has been there for three weeks, since she finally told John he was a drunk and she wasn't going to be beaten up anymore.

I wore my hair in curls and a white dress, matching Katie's niece, the day Katie and John married in my house. It was much smaller then, a living room and

by Becky Karush

kitchen, two bedrooms upstairs. My older brother Sam and John's son from his first marriage wore matching blue suits. Gus, my two year old brother, wore nothing at all and insisted on carrying the ring. The day of their wedding was one in a long line of life spent with Katie and John: We'd known them forever, had lived in their barn for two months when we'd moved back to Maine from Florida. My father and John owned a Christmas wreath business together; they cut brush, my mother and Katie made the wreaths. All of them harvested seaweed from March to October, hanging, drying, and processing it together in the tar-and-shingle shed John and my father had built. Most September days, especially, our families would spread dulse collected that morning on fine screens to dry in the sun.

On one of these days I ruined a cable-knit sweater my mother had made for me. Katie took me into the house, away from my fuming mother, and tried to wash the roofing tar off the sleeves, but nothing worked. I stood in her bathroom looking at her ten or fifteen bottles of shampoo, entranced by the collection. I asked her, my voice blending with the faucet so she could barely hear, if I could organize them. She laughed, said sure, and hung my sopping sweater on a towel rack before she left, still laughing. I sat in the bathtub sorting bottles by color, by size, by smell, in lines that descended perfectly, except for one glass bottle with sloshy clear liquid and sharp smell that didn't fit anywhere. After the bathroom, I moved to her closets, folding sweaters and t-shirts, and then to spice racks and silverware drawers. Katie says now to Patty and my mother that she remembers me washing her living room walls with a mop, humming as the water dripped on my head.

The day I ruined my sweater ended, like most, in Katie and John's kitchen. Earlier that week we had pressed apples and slaughtered the pigs and chickens. We women—I was the youngest at six—sat in the shade of the barn plucking feathers and removing guts; the men racked and roasted the pigs and turned the crank of the cider press around and around again until the apple mash left was dry as the grass. This day, Katie baked the chicken with spinach my mother had brought and we drank most of the tart cider, still cold, from the four gallon-jugs we'd pressed. I sat on the floor, watching my brother Sam and John's son Michael (who, in a rousing game of House, I'd once kissed) play poker. Gus and Nicky, Katie and John's

first child together, hid in cabinets among the pots waiting for their mothers to miss them; Lizzie, the baby, slept in the corner with a pile of chicken feathers in her hand. My father played the guitar, John the harmonica; Katie cooked and my mother clapped. Those were long nights, the pine wood of the walls darkening after we'd eaten, the little boys now asleep, with the smoke from the joints passed from mother to father to mother to father until I closed my eyes in dizziness. The songs my father played—Leadbelly, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Robert Johnson, Junior Walker—twisted above their heads and settled in layers on the mound of beer cans on the table, chorus leading to verse until the music became a mountain, became nonsense that never stopped.

This night, Katie and John decided to saw some wood for the fire—the early chill had seeped up from the bay. I walked with them to the woodpile and sat on the hood of their car while John chose logs and Katie started the chainsaw. She swung it side to side as it sputtered and growled, squealing when she placed it on the first log. Halfway down (I thought I could hear my father singing, somehow, over the noise) it hit a knot and kicked back, swinging up and down with a louder squeal toward Katie's left leg. She nearly fell into its swing and she laughed; John yelled at her to turn it off, turn it off, don't lose a goddamn leg. I went inside, it was too dark to see anymore, and lay my head against my mother's limp arm.

Much later, when the night ended—or maybe it's another night I remember now, in October or April or June—my mother and father woke us up and herded us to our car. My mother drove; my brother sat in the backseat asleep and I lay in the way back, my head propped against the seat of my little brother's bike. Over Route 200, over the bridge, past the store, my head rocked on the seat, my body against the pedals and rough carpet of the car. Almost home, almost home, I could hear my father sing, we're almost home Wendy, but I want to drive. No I can do it leave me alone. Then stay in your lane (I heard him sing). That's a car in front of you—let me drive. Pull over, get out, I'll drive. We pulled to the side of the road; my head swayed forward and back as we stopped, the car humming, and started again.

I don't remember, after this night, spreading dulse or cooking meals with Katie or John, though the day my mother had the seizure that eventually demanded she never drink or smoke again, my older brother were at their house. They must have come in and out during the months when my mother was sick, to clean or baby-sit—almost everyone did—but I don't see their faces in the many adults who made breakfast, took us shopping, helped my father move us back into our

house when the summer renovations were done. Nor do I remember them in my grade school years, after my mother came home. At fourteen, I left for boarding school and saw no one from home; but I heard stories. John had broken his ankle and it was held together now with pins. Their house had burned down and Tank the dog had died. Nicky had gone to juvenile court. Lizzie was beautiful, so much like Katie it was hard to believe. John and my father stopped speaking. Nicky had gone to live with family in New York. John as abusive, everyone agreed, but how and to whom no one told. And finally, this year, Katie packed the pickup and drove as far as she could go, to Pat's.

Dory, in her blue graduation dress, sits on the sofa riffling through the books and clothes she's gotten. I help Patty and my mother collect the black-eyed susan petals we'd scattered when Dory entered the tisny, dazzling, messy house. Patty and my mother talk, heads bent close.

"So she's been here three weeks and she's not going to the support group anymore. I know she's losing courage but I don't know, I can't have her sleep in my tent forever. What if we want to go camping?" Patty grins and sighs. "But I can't turn her away, though she's doing just about everything to piss me off. Did I tell you I found three beer cans hidden on the hot water heater? I thought maybe it was Dory, but she wouldn't sneak around. And yesterday dropping off her laundry, I saw four more cans in the tent."

My mother shakes her head. "Oh man, it's hard. She's been living like that her whole life. What's she supposed to do now?"

"Oh man, it's hard. She's been living like that her whole life. What's she supposed to do now?"

"I know. It's the devil, isn't it. It's just hell." My mother hands Pat the last petals. "Thank God we're still here, Wendy, isn't that right? Thank God." They smile sadly, moving to the kitchen, and begin to arrange the petals on the table into the shapes of stars.

I hug Dory goodnight and go outside. Katie's tent has a soft shadow from the half-moon, and I see her reading by the battery-powered light. I wave to her and she waves back, asking me if I had fun tonight. We talk through the netting until I shiver and she yawns. Goodnight, Becky, she says. Goodnight, I say. Sleep well. I pass the pines, half-circled around us, as the sky deepens, and the field settles to a hush; as the stars multiply, and the ocean folds itself, again and again, into blue.



Thorsten, Susan, and Me

Why Soap Operas are Not Crap

BY MONIQUE DAVIAU

Upon my return home at the end of my second year at Smith College, my mother had a lot to deal with. My unshaven legs and hopeless obsession with the Galaxie 500 four-CD box set didn't even faze her compared to my insistence on watching *One Life to Live* and *General Hospital* EVERY DAY. She'd sit beside me on the couch with a painfully ambivalent look on her face as I gleefully explained the Patrick-Marty-Dylan love triangle on *OLTL* (soap magazine abbreviation for *One Life to Live*), or exactly why Maurice Benard of *CH* was the best actor on daytime. My mother, much like my peers, my extended family, and pretty much everyone except a few friends who are soap opera aficionados, belongs to the common school of thought that soap operas are low-brow, cheesy entertainment for uneducated housewives with bad sex lives and even worse hairstyles. I'm here to say that soap operas may seem so to those who never watch (and most of the people who feel that way have never sat through an entire episode), but they are in fact highly interesting, and dare I say, the most feminist thing that network television has to offer.

According to Martha Nochimson in her book *No End To Her: Soap Opera and the Female Subject*, "A narrative form associated primarily with women, soap opera tends to provoke the same mix of desire and disdain that femininity itself produces in our culture. As with women, so with soap opera: one cannot speak of desire without ambiguity, since both the enjoyment of soap opera and the comfort and delights of intimacy associated with women and celebrated by soap opera have been defined mainly by their detractors." Historically, soap operas have been the only true television genre that caters solely to women, and as we've seen time and time again, anything celebrating women always has a detractor. The writing teams and production staffs have been dominated by women since soaps were imported to television from radio in the 1950s. And although many soaps were originally conceived to sell household products to their assumed audience (uneducated housewives with bad sex lives and worse hair), they quickly assumed a textual rebellion against the assumed Angel in the House/Motherly role of women. Nowhere on daytime television of the 1990s will you find the stereotypical housewife.

Once upon a time a study reported that on prime-time television, 70% of the characters are male, whereas on daytime it's 50-50. On most soap operas you will find a fair and diverse representation of women characters. You may be sitting there thinking that all female soap characters are rich, glamorous types with big diamonds and bigger hair, but watch any daytime soap (perhaps excepting *Days of Our Lives*, considered

by soap aficionados to be the most ignorant and poorly written, albeit the most popular) and you will see many different types of women, young and old, rich and poor. For example, both *One Life to Live* and *All My Children* feature front-burner stories about Latino families. *OLTL*'s more upper-class characters are involved in the community center located in a less prosperous area of Llanview, the fictional town where *OLTL* takes place.

Some scholarly types have even hypothesized that daytime soaps helped to spark second-wave feminism among middle-class women. The portrayal of female characters whom the audience could identify with was that of women in high places, working outside the home, making decisions, getting divorces, having affairs with dashing men, and accepting nothing less. This seemed to have touched upon something in these women that made feminist doctrine more accessible and appealing.

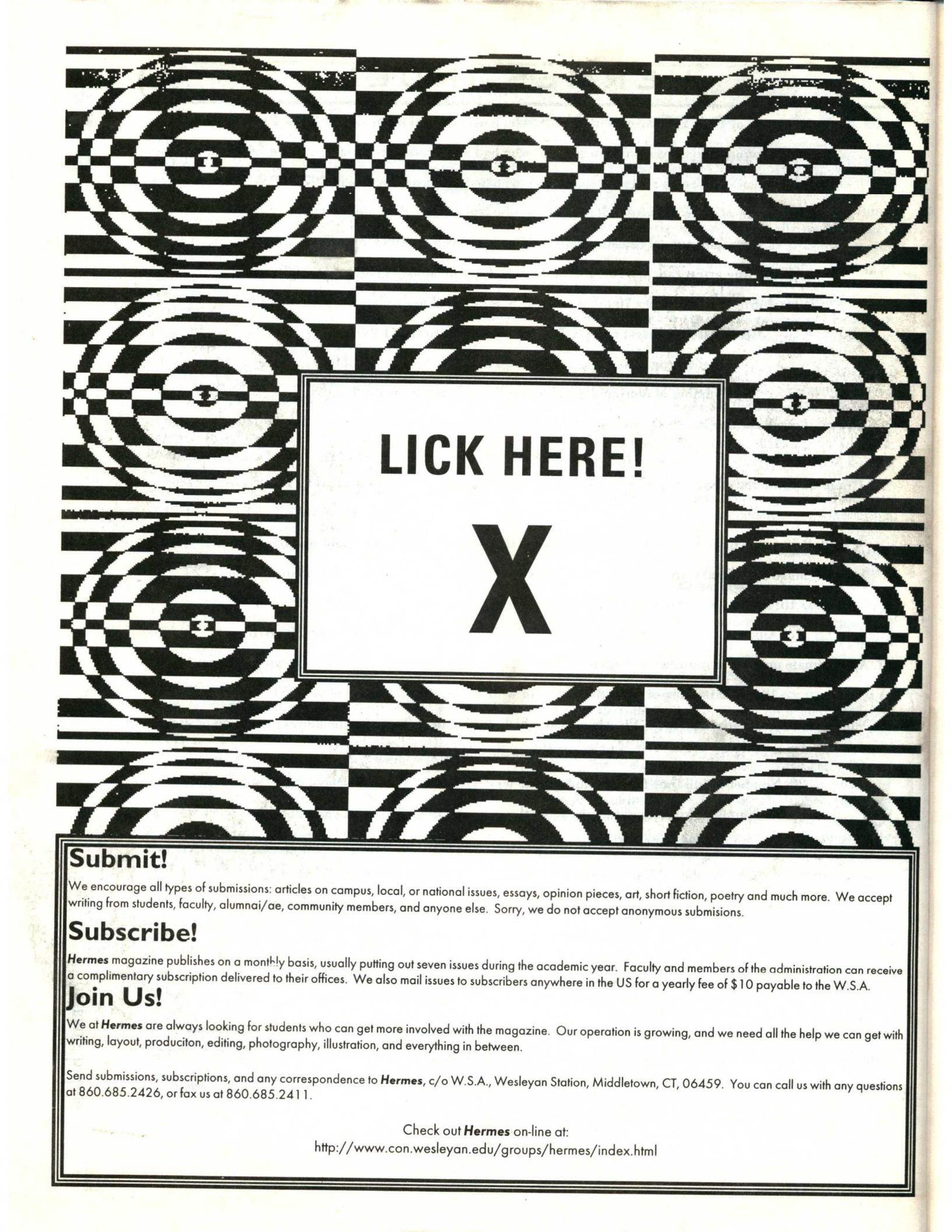
Also, soap opera is the only genre that consistently and eloquently addresses important issues. The first incest story ever to air on television was on a soap opera. Other topics that have been covered include rape, homophobia, breast cancer, AIDS, abortion, and domestic abuse. Women's concerns have always had a place on daytime.

Finally, I would like to address the belief that soaps are stupid and crappy and have no place in the lives of educated persons: feh! If you turn on a soap opera for the first time and you see *OLTL*'s Thorsten Kaye (who plays Patrick Thornhart, the hulking Irish, poetry-writing, horse guy) gazing into Susan Haskell's (Marty Saybrooke, the rape victim, medical student, and Patrick's soulmate love interest who's face you may have seen on L'Oreal hair dye in the past) eyes and they're saying some mushy love stuff and you're ready to toss your cookies or laugh or do something else, you're bound to think that soaps are vapid boring garbage. Soap watching is cumulative. You have to master the knowledge of the complex relationships and the intricacies of the narrative. When you watch a sitcom, you're fed the entire story line in half an hour, whereas soap opera's plots go on for months and months, requiring a personal investment from the viewer, which is way more rewarding than wasting a half hour on disposable laughs and vomit jokes. If you're not willing to make that commitment, then chances are you'll remain jaded about soaps your whole life and never know the true pleasures of seeing Thorsten Kaye read poetry against a background of Irish flute music or view one of Maurice Benard's sexy sidelong glances. And you'll truly be missing out.

HERMES INDEX

1. Percent of 18 to 25 year-olds in the U.S. who had ever used marijuana in 1979: 68.2
2. Percent of 18 to 25 year-olds in the U.S. who had ever used marijuana in 1993: 47.4
3. Percent of 18 to 25 year-olds in the U.S. who had ever used cocaine in 1979: 27.5
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5. Per capita annual consumption of coffee in the U.S. in 1993, in gallons: 26
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7. Total drug arrest rate per 100,000 in the U.S. for drug abuse violations in 1993: 437.2
8. Total drug arrest rate per 100,000 in the Midwest in 1993: 244.9
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Sources: 1-9: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1995; 10: *U.S.S.R. Facts and Figures Annual*, 1977; 11-15: *The New York Times*; 16: *Vibe* magazine; 17: *The New York Times*; 18-19: SJB summaries for 1995'96 academic year; 20-27: 1996 *Treasurer's Report of Wesleyan University*



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